

Pancoast-Lewis-Wharton House  
336 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1083

HABS  
PA  
51-PHILA  
27-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1083

## PANCOAST-LEWIS-WHARTON HOUSE

Address: 336 Spruce Street [south side of Spruce Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets]. Numbered 130 Spruce Street until mid-nineteenth century. Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: The Rector, Church Wardens, and Vestrymen of Christ Church in the city of Philadelphia.

Present Occupant: Dr. Ernest A. Harding, Rector of Christ Church.

Present Use: Rectory.

Statement of Significance: The Pancoast-Lewis-Wharton House is a Philadelphia row house with fine interior details. It has been the home of several distinguished citizens during its more than one hundred and seventy years of active use.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

	Grantor	Grantee
5/9/1788	Joshua Cresson, merchant Samuel Jones, house carpenter Isaac Pearson, hatter  a lot sit S s Spruce St. 38' E from 4th St. Front: 20' Depth: 140'	<u>Samuel Pancoast</u> , house carpenter  for 280 pounds  (D 21 493)
1/14/1796	Samuel Pancoast, house carpenter Sarah h/w  a 3 story brick messuage on the above lot	<u>Mordecai Lewis</u> , merchant  for 3025 pounds  (D 53 454)
6/5/1809	Thomas Morris et al exs of est of Mordecai Lewis	<u>Samuel N. Lewis</u>  (IC 3 162)

11/4/1817	Samuel Archer, merchant Jonah Thompson, merchant et al effects of Samuel N. Lewis	<u>Samuel Rowland Fisher,</u> merchant  (MR 16-408)
10/17/1834	Samuel Rowland Fisher partitioned by Orphan's Court	<u>Deborah F. Wharton*</u>
6/7/1875 will	Deborah Wharton	<u>Charles W. Wharton*</u> et al
12/6/1888	Charles W. Wharton et al ex of will of Deborah F. Wharton	<u>John C. Gallen*</u> trustee
12/6/1888	John C. Gallen, trustee	<u>Joseph Wharton*</u>
11/20/1913	Girard Trust Company trustee of will of Joseph Wharton, dec'd	<u>Ernest Walter*</u> <u>Rose A. h/w</u>
3/11/1960	Rose Amelia Walter wife of the late Ernest Walter	<u>Edwin William Walter</u> <u>Theodore R. Walter</u>
8/3/1960	Edwin William Walter Ruth Elizabeth h/w Theodore R. Walter Helen Olga, h/w Rose A. Walter (also known as Rose Amelia Walter), widow	<u>The Rector, Church</u> <u>Wardens &amp; Vestrymen</u> <u>of Christ Church in</u> <u>the City of Philadelphia</u>

\*Information obtained from records of transfer, Registry Unit,  
Department of Records, plan 3 S 6, lot 115.

(The above chain of title was prepared by Robert A. Corrigan, Research  
Assistant, Philadelphia Historical Commission September 11, 1962)

2. Date of Erection: c. 1790.
3. Architect, builder: Probably built by Samuel Pancoast,  
house carpenter, a member of the Friendship Carpenters'  
Company which merged with the Carpenter's Company on

January 16, 1786, and of which he was a member until his death in 1834. He is listed in the Philadelphia Directories of the 1780's as . . . "house carpenter, Chestnut b. [between] Second and Third - streets."

4. Original plans, construction:

"Survey of 6th Oct 1796 a house belonging [occupied by] Peter Reaves

Situate on the South side of Spruce Street between 3rd & 4th Streets 30 [sic-20 feet] feet front, 36 feet deep, three storys high, 9 inch party walls, 8 rooms and pasage in first story narrow Boards in floor railed. Through Bass & surbass Chimney Brest plain mantle Tabernacle frame in each parlor. Single cornice round one & dintal [sic] cornices round the other, wainscot doors and windows -- Third Story has comon floor scerting [sic] surbass plastered, one arch and one plain dormer window, small frontispiece & front door, Bracket Eve cornice. ---

StairCase 17 by 10 feet 3 Story high 9 inch walls, Two Storys of open newel stairs Ramped Bracketed first story wainscoted, the other scerting [sic] half Rail and pilasters up the wall, all the Rails mahogany ---

The Kitchen and Room over it 21 by 14 feet --- Two Storys high 9 inch walls , The whole painted inside & out, 6 years old ---

Gunning Bedford

House. £500

Backbuilding 250 at 45 / \_"

(Philadelphia Contributionship Policy Nos. 2777 and 2778)

5. Notes on alterations and additions:

1834 "I have Resurveyed a House belonging to William Wharton

Situate on the South side of Spruce St. East of & near Fourth St. N. 130. Insured by Policy No. 2777. addition to Back building, originally the old Kitchen raised to 3 stories high. a new Kitchen build adjoining to the old one. 14 feet by 16 feet, three Stories high, 9" walls. The floor of 5/4" of yellow pine, plain base round, single mouldings, mantle shelf.

dresser & closet, glass 8 by 10", outside shutters.  
2nd Story, one room floor--5/4 yellow pine, the 3rd Story  
in two rooms-including that over the old. Kitchen, floor  
5/4 yellow pine,-base round - single mouldings, & two  
breast closets in the 3rd Story. - Glass in both 8 by 10" -  
outside, venetian shutters - private winding Stairs from  
the Kitchen to the 3rd Story. - the old Kitchen is con-  
verted into a Sittingroom with a plain marble in lieu of  
a Shelf. - the dresser &c removed. -- Brick eave, Shedroof  
covered with leaded tin & tin pipe. --

12 Mo.31-1834

(signed) John C. Evans

New policy issued.

(signed) Wm Wharton"

(Philadelphia Contributionship Policy No. 2777 & January  
10, 1835)

1848 "I have Surveyed a brick House & Backbuilding,  
belonging to William Wharton, situate on the south side  
of Spruce Street, East of and near Fourth Street No. 130,  
The House being 20 feet front 36 feet deep, Piazza 10 feet  
by 17 feet.-Dining Room & Kitchen 14 feet by 37 feet all  
three Stories high. Privy & Bathroom 6 feet by 9 feet  
two Stories high. the 2nd Story of wood. --

The lower Story of the house is in two rooms & passage  
the floor of clean, narrow yellow pine, moulded base round  
& double architraves to the doors & windows. Cornice at  
the top.- two marble mantles with reeded columns & fluted  
frieze, marble hearth & recess closets folding doors between  
the rooms, plain arch & pannel'd wainscot in the passage  
& up one flight of the stairs.--Glass in front 9 by 11<sup>in</sup>  
back -12 by 20<sup>in</sup> outside shutters to both. - The 2nd  
story in two rooms & short passage the floor of clean yel-  
low pine, base & subbase round, double architraves to  
the doors & single do [ditto] to the windows-pannel'd.  
Chimney breasts, two breast, & one recess closet.-- Glass  
9 by 11<sup>in</sup> outside shutters, the back venetian & pannel'd  
inside shutters to the latter.

The 3rd story in two rooms & short passage, the floor  
of comm. jersey pine, plain base, singles architraves &  
mouldings--plain wooden mantles & fan breast closets.

Glass 9 by 11<sup>in</sup> plain inside, & venetian outside shutters back.--The garret in three rooms, two planed board-partitions, the floor of comm. yellow pine, plain base, single architraves. One circular & one plain dormer window. Glass 9 by 11 & 8 by 10<sup>in</sup> & a trap door in the roof. Modillion Eave front plain do [ditto] back, copper gutters & pipes.--Stairs in the piazza, open newell, string bracketted, turn'd ballusters & large ramp'd mahogany rail from the lower to the 3rd story & close straight stairs between the rooms from the 3rd to the Garret.--

The Dining room floor of comm. yellow pine, base round, single architraves & mouldings - plain marble mantle. Kitchen floor 5/4<sup>in</sup> yellow pine, plain base, single architraves & mouldings, mantle shelf, closets & sink.--Glass 8 by 10<sup>in</sup> outside shutters.--

The 2nd story in two rooms-the floors, one inch & 5/4<sup>in</sup> yellow pine, plain base round--single architraves & mouldings, one plain mantle & five closets, bath tub in the back room lined, & pipe for cold and hot water.--a bath room back of this with lined tub & pipe for cold water, a privy, & a gallery on two sides enclosed with rolling blinds.--

The 3rd story in two rooms, floor partly inch & partly 5/4<sup>in</sup> yellow pine, plain base, single mouldings. Three closets. Glass 8 by 10<sup>in</sup> venetian shutters to both stories. Private winding stairs from the Kitchen to the 3rd Story.--Shed roof, Brick Eave, tin gutter & pipes.--The lower, 2nd & 3rd Stories of the house, Piazza & Dining room & room over it are papered.--

12 M<sup>o</sup>28. 1848

John C. Evans  
Treasurer"

(Philadelphia Contributionship Policy No. 7605.)

c. 1913 "In 1913 the late Ernest Walter, who operated a cigar store at Second and Spruce Streets, bought the house for his family and carried out further enlargements -- including the installation of four baths."

The Philadelphia Bulletin 9/23/60

1962 The house was renovated for use as a rectory for Christ Church with the architectural work under the supervision of George Robbins, AIA. The window sills of several windows in the piazza were raised by brickwork below and miscellaneous exterior brickwork was patched. During the renovation extensive stencil decoration was discovered under the wallpaper probably dating from late 19th century. The stairway to the basement under main stairway was removed in order to install a lavatory.

6. Important old views:

- a. Photograph of north facade (undated, probably late 19th century), Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Photocopy included in this HABS photo-data book.
  - b. Old Philadelphia Survey, Free Library of Philadelphia. Seven measured drawings of 336 Spruce Street (Three of which include details from 338 Spruce Street), 1932.
- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: The Pancoast-Lewis-Wharton House "was built in 1790 by Samuel Pancoast . . . and sold by him in 1796 to Mordecai Lewis, a well-known merchant. Prior to the sale, and until 1800 it was occupied by Peter Reeve, also a prominent merchant, and his family. Anthony Morris, a noted attorney, statesman and East India merchant, made it his home from 1800 to 1804. Morris, while at the Court of Spain, negotiated the treaty which ceded Florida to the United States.

"Reeve and Samuel N. Lewis, son of Mordecai, lived in the house until 1817, when it was purchased by Samuel Rowland Fisher as a wedding gift to his daughter Deborah at her marriage to William Wharton in that year. Mrs. Wharton was a prominent Friend and for many years active in bettering the lot of Negroes and American Indians. Her town residence became well known as 'the Wharton House' during the seventy years she resided on Spruce Street - thirty years as wife and mother, forty years as a widow. The house was the birthplace of nine of the Wharton's ten children, of whom Joseph Wharton became best known. He was a foundry executive, a director of the corporation that is the Bethlehem Steel Company today, a founder of Swarthmore College and the endower of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. He purchased the house from his mother's estate at her death in 1888, and held it until his own death in 1913."

Christ Church, "Christ Church Rectory - A Project  
to Restore an Historic House",  
Philadelphia.

- C. Sources of Information: Sources appear below excerpts.  
See also: Eberlein, Harold Donaldson, and Hubbard,  
Cortlandt Van Dyke. Portrait of a Colonial City.  
Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1939.  
pp. 455-61, Photo p. 457.

Prepared by William B. Bassett, Historian  
National Park Service  
August 1964

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Pancoast-Lewis-Wharton House is a three-and-a-half story brick house with typical Philadelphia row house plan with late Georgian details. Most of the original woodwork remains.
2. Condition of Fabric: Structurally sound; currently being renovated.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: Front building 20' x 36', three-and-a-half stories high; piazza 10' x 17', three stories high; backbuilding 21' x 14', three stories high.
2. Foundation: Rubble below grade. East party wall of frontbuilding is faced with brick.
3. Wall construction: Red brick wall, 9" thick at party walls, piazza, and end. Front wall is  $\pm$  1'-4" (thick).
  - a. Street elevation: Red brick stretchers, black glazed headers laid in Flemish bond; limestone belt courses and plain base. No lintels.
  - b. Piazza and backbuilding: laid in red brick common bond; no lintels or belt courses.
4. Stoop: White marble, three steps with molded nosing.

Bulkhead: Cheeks dressed in limestone; modern steel doors.
5. Chimneys: Webbed brick chimneys on west party wall have been restored recently. Brick chimneys in backbuildings.



6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Front entrance has arched transom and modified Doric frontispiece with  $3/4$  engaged, round, unfluted wooden columns on stone plinth blocks. Beaded corner joins frontispiece to jamb. There is a carved key block and the entablature is denticulated. Four-panel jamb and paneled arched soffitt. Door has eight raised molded panels with a radial fanlight with lead tracery over. Reeded transom bar. Marble sill with nosing. Six-panel door with four-light transom to piazza yard original. Wooden frame sill obliterated.
- b. Windows and shutters: First- and second-floor floors (front) have nine-over-nine light double-hung wooden sash. These are the original frames and sash. Third floor has six-over-six light, double-hung wooden sash (original frame and sash). Attic dormer window is "Gothic" double-hung sash. Back windows are same as front (first floor are new), except attic, which has six-over-six light, double-hung wooden sash with fan front; eight-over-eight light, rear.

Shutters: First- and second-floors have new, four-paneled shutters. Third- and attic-floors have no shutters. Backbuilding has original shutters missing, but the originals were paneled on one floor (presumably the first) and Venetian on the other, according to an insurance survey of 1832.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: Front building has a gable roof ( $8/12$  pitch), new tin on roof and dormer cheeks. New tin hatch. Piazza has a shed roof with tin covering; backbuilding has a shed roof and hatch all covered with new tin.
- b. Cornice: Front section has a modillion cornice; the back, a box cornice.
- c. Dormers: Front dormer has a gable roof, new "Gothic" sash, pilasters; rear dormer also has a gable roof and a rectangular window.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: Side-hall plan (two rooms per floor) with rear piazza and back wing.

2. Flooring:

- a. Cellar: Original herringbone brick paving in front building.
- b. Piazza and backbuilding: Earth floors covered with a cementitious material.
- c. First floor: Original random width oak flooring in front building and piazza. Linoleum in backbuilding.
- d. Second and Third and Attic floors: Original floors throughout.

3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster ceilings throughout. Paneled wainscot in entry hall and piazza continuing up to second floor only, plaster above.

West party wall in front room of main building is paneled from floor to ceiling. Tabernacle frame over 19th century marble mantel; chair rail around remaining perimeter; fret cornice has 45° bevels. Wallpaper on plaster on remaining walls. Rear room has tabernacle frame over marble mantel; plaster on remaining walls.

Backbuilding has plaster walls with chair rail along west wall.

Second floor: Floor to ceiling paneling on west party wall in front and back rooms of front building. Continuous chair rail with plaster above and below. Hall is plastered and has a chair rail, which extends into piazza. Paper on plaster in backbuilding.

Third floor: No paneling on this floor level. Chair rail is interrupted in front room by (now demolished) partition. Paper on plaster walls. Wooden base 5" high.

Attic: Raw plaster walls.

- 4. Doorways and doors: All doors are original with the exception of doors noted on HABS drawings which are 19th century.
- 5. Trim: Continuous chair rails.

6. Hardware: Very little original hardware remains.  
Hinges seem to be 19th or 20th century.
  7. Lighting: No indication of original lighting.  
Presently lighted by electricity.
  8. Heating: Originally by fireplaces; now by boiler  
in basement of front building.
- D. Site: Currently in redevelopment area. Most of buildings  
around it are to be remodeled and/or restored.  
Fashionable neighborhood in 18th century.

Prepared by Robert E. Cooper, Architect  
National Park Service  
Summer 1961